

**Governor's Upper Yellowstone River Task Force**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**September 19, 2000**  
**City/County Community Room**  
**Meeting began at 7:00 pm**

**I. Introductions**

**Members Present:**

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| John Bailey, Chair      |                |
| Mike Atwood, Vice Chair | Jerry O'Hair   |
| Roy Aserlind            | Rod Siring     |
| David Haug              | Bob Wiltshire  |
| Tom Lane                | Ellen Woodbury |
| Brant Oswald            | Jim Woodhull   |

**Others Present:**

|                              |                   |                        |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Terri Marceron, Ex-Officio   | Richard Ladzinski | Doug Ensign            |
| Laurence Siroky, Ex-Officio  | Dennis Glick      | Zena Ensign            |
| Allan Steinle, Ex-Officio    | Jim Barrett       | David Potter           |
| Stan Sternberg, Ex-Officio   | Max Christian     | Jeanne-Marie Souvigney |
| Joel Tohtz, Ex-Officio       | Andy Dana         | Jim Robinson           |
| Liz Galli-Noble, Coordinator | Chuck Dalby       | Stan Todd              |
|                              |                   | Karl Biastoch          |

**II. Prior Meeting Minutes**

The August 24, 2000 minutes were approved with the following modifications (as requested by Greater Yellowstone Coalition staff):

1. Jim Barrett of the Park County Environmental Council was also present and participated in the August 10, 2000 GYC/Task Force meeting.
2. GYC does not necessarily want to be part of the Task Force (as was stated in the minutes); instead GYC had commented on a possible conflict with their conservation group representative and the possibility of change in the future.

**III. Financial Updates**

| Grants                          | Grant Amount | Spent      | Remaining Balance |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|
| DEQ Start-up Grant              | 49,138.00    | 23,737.28  | 25,400.72         |
| DEQ 319 Grant (1)               | 40,000.00    | 40,000.00  | 0                 |
| DNRC RDGP Grant                 | 299,940.00   | 108,946.17 | 190,993.83        |
| DEQ 319 Grant (2)               | 58,000.00    | 2,628.16   | 55,371.84         |
| DNRC 223                        | 6,500.00     | 0          | 6,500.00          |
| DNRC Watershed Assistance Grant | 10,000.00    | 993.60     | 9,006.40          |

Liz Galli-Noble announced that contract rewrites for the first RDGP grant have been completed. The contracts will reflect the shift of funding (\$60,000) from the USGS Hydrology Study to the University of Montana Riparian Trend Analysis. The Montana Department of Transportation has provided additional funding for the USGS for the Hydrology Study, freeing-up \$60,000.

#### **IV. Research Team Presentation Series**

At each monthly Task Force meeting from September 2000 through February 2001, each research team will update the Task Force and public as to their data collection progress to date, and projections for 2001.

##### **Presentation #1.**

##### **Fisheries Habitats and Populations—Effects of Bank Stabilization Structures on Fish and their Habitat**

Adam Craig, an MSU graduate student and fisheries researcher under the supervision of Dr. Al Zale, was the first presenter in this series. The following is an outline of what Adam Craig reported to the Task Force and public at the meeting.

A. The fisheries research team completed a draft literature review in July 2000. Results of previous studies found that alteration of natural stream function could result in:

- Good and bad habitat for insects
- Higher abundances of fish
- Lower abundances of fish

B. Why the inconsistent results?

- Positive effects were from previously degraded or warmwater habitats
- Negative effects were from pristine or coldwater habitats
- No long-term studies had been conducted over large areas

C. Examples of enhanced bank stabilization for fish were reviewed

- Riprap (larger rock, fish groins, filling with gravel)
- Current deflection structures (barbs, jetties, spur dikes)
- Incorporate woody debris

D. The research team has selected three study areas

- Reach 1: Loch Leven to Pine Creek Bridge
- Reach 2: Livingston (Park Clinic to Mayor's Landing)
- Reach 3: Highway 89 Bridge and downstream

E. The research team selected the following "habitats of interest"

- Rip rapped banks
- Jetties
- Barbs
- Combination banks—banks that are both rip rapped and have barbs or jetties
- Unstabilized banks (natural)

F. The team has tested several sampling techniques over the past summer, with differing success:

- Snorkeling—unsuccessful due to poor visibility; will not be used
- Underwater video—unsuccessful due to poor visibility; will not be used
- Electrofishing (drift boat and mobile probe)—although separately these techniques were not highly successful, in combination they worked best; this will be the method used

G. Additional notes:

- The study is targeting juvenal fish, which are defined as 30 to 130 mm or 2 to 8 inches in length.
- The team will sample year round.

## V. Socio-Economic Subcommittee

Mike Atwood, Socio-Economic Subcommittee Chair, updated the Task Force on the Request for Proposal (RFP) that the subcommittee has been developing over the past four months. Mike reported that he had discussed the August 24 version of the draft RFP with Rodney Schwartz (US Army Corps Engineers). A conclusion of that discussion was that the RFP fell short of the Corps needs. Therefore, Mike and Liz Galli-Noble attempted to combine the two versions (Subcommittee and Corps) and came up with a new version that would satisfy both groups' needs. That version was presented to the Task Force and public at this meeting.

Lengthy discussion of the combined version of the RFP ensued. Several statements made concerning this topic were:

Ellen Woodbury: She does not support this proposal. The Task Force is not doing NEPA in any other study; why this one? This is not our role as a Task Force, and beyond our charge from the Governor.

Terri Marceron: We have mixed a proposed action under a NEPA requirement with collecting information. The Task Force is not directed to make regulatory decisions. Agencies, like the Corps, have this jurisdiction not the Task Force. NEPA requires disclosure of an affect from an action, not that the decision made necessarily reflects that affect. We need to be careful how we use the word "scoping."

A separate RFP is needed for scoping and NEPA needs.

Laurence Siroky: NEPA is a process; we do not want to represent what we are doing as NEPA compliant. The Task Force is an information-gathering group; that should not infringe on the NEPA process. We have separated the information gathering and NEPA process in all the other studies.

John Bailey: It was not the Task Force's intention to go into the NEPA process with the Corps. Much like the Special Area Management Plan discussions a couple of years ago, the Task Force does not have the authority or want to enter these arenas.

Allan Steinle: He will discuss this matter with the Corps in Omaha. He will explain that the Task Force does not need to do everything that the Corps needs.

Mike Atwood: The subcommittee needs a broad understanding of what the Task Force wants from this socio-economic assessment.

Responses:

- (1) Focus on baseline data (a snap shot of the community)
- (2) Trend analysis (change)
- (3) Illustrate successes, people working together (water leasing, agricultural improvements, etc.)
- (4) Show where there is great conflict

It was decided that the RFP would go back to the Socio-Economic Subcommittee for further discussion and work. The subcommittee is meeting with the Corps on September 25, where the RFP will be rewritten. The subcommittee and Rodney Schwartz will then present a new version to the Task Force

and public at the October 19 Task Force meeting.

## **VI. Hydgeomorphology (HGM) Presentation**

Marcus Miller, Wetland Biologist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, gave an informational presentation to the Task Force on the *Hydrogeomorphic Approach to Functional Assessment* or HGM, for short. Mr. Miller's presentation was simply an introduction of the HGM topic.

The University of Montana, Corps, and NRCS are presently investigating whether or not this approach can be applied to the upper Yellowstone River system, so this presentation was designed to give the Task Force and public background information on a possible, new approach to river function assessment. The "A Team" leader (Dr. Ric Hauer)--who conducted the HGM investigation on the upper Yellowstone River--would like to return to present their results to the Task Force in December.

## **VII. Outreach and Education Activities**

John Bailey reported that he, Rod Siring, and Allan Steinle hosted a tour on the Yellowstone River for the Corps on September 11, 2000.

The Office of Management and Budget will also be visiting the area on October 29, 2000, but we have no deals about that visit to date.

Liz Galli-Noble will do a presentation on the Task Force and the Cumulative Effects Investigation for the Business and Professional Women of Livingston on September 20.

Liz Galli-Noble will do a presentation on the Task Force, Technical Advisory Committee, and the Cumulative Effects Investigation for scientists, managers, and policy makers attending the *Changing Landscapes of Rural America* conference. They are passing through the Upper Yellowstone River Watershed on September 22, en route to Mammoth.

## **VIII. Future Task Force Meetings Schedule**

Liz was asked to inquire about the reopening of the Yellowstone Inn, and the availability and costs for renting meeting rooms.

Next Task Force meetings are:

Thursday, October 19, 2000 at the City/County Courthouse, Community Room at 7:00 pm.

Thursday, November 16, 2000, location not determined.

Tuesday, December 12, 2000, location not determined.

***Liz Galli-Noble would like Task Force members to call her at 222-3701 if they will be unable to attend scheduled meetings.***

## **IX. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm**